

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4574

S E C R E T TEHRAN 8233

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IR

SUBJECT: SHAH ON CORRUPTION

1. AFTER AMBASSADOR BYROADE'S AUDIENCE WITH SHAH WAS FINISHED, I ASKED TO STAY BEHIND TO DISCUSS WITH SHAH APPROACH OF SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO SWEDISH AMBASSADOR AND OTHERS ABOUT ALLEGED INCREASE IN DOMESTIC OPPOSITION TO GOI AS RESULT SHAH'S RECENT DECREES ON CORRUPTION AND ON NEW REQUIREMENT THAT GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AND IMMEDIATE SUBORDINATES DIVEST THEMSELVES OF ANY SHARES THEY HOLD IN ANY COMPANIES OR INDUSTRIES. SHAH WAS OBVIOUSLY STARTLED TO LEARN THAT SOVIETS WERE CLAIMING TO NOTE INCREASED OPPOSITION AND ASKED RHETORICALLY HOW ANYONE COULD IMAGINE SUCH A THING. WE AGREED THAT THIS WAS SOVIET PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE DESIGNED TO UNSETTLE THE GOVERNMENT. THE SHAH IMMEDIATELY TIED IT IN TO THE RECENT TUDEH PARTY/IRAQI COMMUNIST PROCLAMATION CRITICIZING GOI ACTIVITIES. SHAH IS CONVINCED THAT SOVIETS ARE ATTEMPTING TO RECREATE TUDEH PARTY AND PUT MONEY INTO STRENGTHENING OF IRANIAN COMMUNIST MOVEMENT.

2. BEING PENSIVE FOR A MOMENT ABOUT WHAT WE HAD BEEN DISCUSSING, THE SHAH SAID, "PERHAPS I HAVE BEEN TOO TOUGH ON CORRUPTION." TO WHICH I IMMEDIATELY REPLIED, "NO, SIR, YOU CANNOT BE TOO TOUGH ON CORRUPTION." THERE THEN ENSUED A DISCUSSION OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN IRAN IN THE YEARS AHEAD IF CORRUPTION IS NOT STEMMED WITH BILLIONS OF DOLLARS

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FLOATING AROUND IN THE ECONOMY. IT WAS QUITE CLEAR FROM THIS DISCUSSION THAT THE SHAH INDEED IS CONVINCED THAT HIS PROGRAM AND THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE WILL GO RIGHT DOWNHILL IF HE IS NOT ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE CORRUPTION ISSUE.

3. WHEN THE SHAH MENTIONED HIS INSISTENCE THAT CERTAIN
HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS DIVEST THEMSELVES OF STOCKS
AND
HOLDINGS, I SAID, "WON'T MANY OF THEM HAVE TO UNLOAD?"
THE SHAH REPLIED, "A FEW, NOT ALL."
HELMHD

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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